

We Can Change, They Can't

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Summary:

How does one deal with being in love with someone who can't change what they are teased for, if you know you can change what you get teased for? Bill and Ben discuss.

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“Fuck.” Bill whispered quietly, shutting his book with a soft thud. Ben looked over at him concerned, marking his place before shutting his own book.

“What’s up?” Ben asked, scooting closer and leaning on the table. Bill frowned and looked down at the floor.

“I don’t-t know how to say this Ben.” Bill started, sighing and shifting his feet again, dragging them across the carpet. “I jus-s-st really don’t.”

“It’s ok I’ll, take your time.” Ben said, idly tapping out something on the desk as Bill sat and collected his thoughts.

Bill finally spoke. “You like Mike.” He said and Ben went bright red. His idle tapping stopped and he looked at Bill who was staring at him curiously, watching his reaction.

“Am I that obvious Bill?” He asked, and Bill laughed quietly, monitoring his sound as they were still in the library. Ben was seriously asking, so Bill quickly sobered and answered.

“No. But I know a lot about liking your friend.” Ben didn’t ask who Bill was talking about, he figured in time Bill would tell him and it did no good to pry. Ben just nodded, letting out a small sigh of relief that he wasn’t so obvious in his love for one Mike Hanlon.

“How do you d-d-deal with loving,” Bill paused, eyes widening before quickly and very nervously speaking again, “s-s-shit I mean liking.” Bill again paused and took a deep breath in. Ben looked at him kindly, knowing that Bill was having a particularly bad day today.

“Ben how do you deal with liking s-someone knowing that they can’t change what they get b-b-bullied for and you can stop-p-p or change what they bully *you* for?” Bill finished and Ben sucked in a deep breath. That was hitting close to home.

“I,” Ben faltered, “Bill I don’t know how I deal.” Bill nodded solemnly

and Ben continued, grasping for something to say. "I really don't because we're just friends and there's only so much support that I can give him without exposing myself for, you know." Bill chuckled and Ben smiled slightly, breathing deeply again.

"Yeah." Bill said simply. "I mean look I can s-stop mys-self from stuttering if I really try and he just," Bill bit his lip and clasped his hands together "Ben it's his religion, and he loves it and I would *never* try to change it but." Ben noticed that Bill was shaking slightly. "We can change and they can't."

"That's true." Ben said simply, placing a small hand on Bill's knee to steady him. "But even if they could, they wouldn't want to. And you know that." Bill nodded, his eyebrows furrowing.

"See we both know Mike loves his skin, he gets bullied and has been through more hell than we have sometimes for simply the fact that he's black but you know it's so fundamentally him and he would never change it. And you know, he can't." Ben said, rubbing Bill's knee.

"And S-stan is so proudly and beautifully jewish that he would never leave his faith behind. You've seen his necklace and his bracelet." Bill said, and Ben nodded, both of them knowing exactly what jewelry. "And l-like you said it's-s so fundamentally him that even if he could he wouldn't change it. And neither would I."

The two sat in silence for a moment after that. It was a hard topic, even though neither of them fully knew what they were talking about as a whole.

"I think the best thing we can do is be there for them." Ben said. "Clean their wounds and all that, help them back up." Bill nodded and smiled, his brow now unfurrowed. "I mean they obviously are strong enough on their own but it never hurts right?"

"Yeah." Bill said. "W-w-we just have to be there for them." Ben nodded back, removing his hand from Bill's knee now that he had been calmed.

"B-but Ben I'm glad you brought this up." Bill said, stretching his

arms out and smiling widely now at his friend. "It's-s-s an important thing to think about who can change and who can't. And I definitely needed to get my, uh, huge crush on Stan off my chest." Ben laughed, and patted the other boy on the back.

"I know, feel's good. And I promise never to tell unless you two really can't get your heads out of your asses." Ben said, winking and making Bill go temporarily red.

"Right back at you Ben." Bill said, reaching for his book. Ben took the cue that the conversation was over and reached for his own, reopening to the page he had marked as Bill flipped through his book in vain to try and find the page he had left off on.

Unbeknownst to them, behind the shelves situated just next to their table stood two blushing boys. Stanley Uris and Michael Hanlon stood in shock, attempting to process all they had overheard.

Mike shook his head, a dopey smile now overcoming his features. He looked over to Stan who was still blushing but sporting a grin of his own.

"Stan," Mike whispered, quickly looking through the shelves to make sure neither Ben or Bill had heard, "Stan." Stan nodded, locking eyes with Mike.

"I know." The boy said, his normally still hands flapping excitedly. "I know Mike!" Mike giggled, and grabbed Stan's arm, leading them out of the shelves and towards the exit. They moved quickly and hopefully quietly as they shut the library doors and basically glided down the hallways.

Both sets of boys, Ben and Bill, Mike and Stan, didn't speak anymore words because albeit not resolved fully, the love in their hearts still bloomed.

Author's Note:

can i get a fuckin uhhhhh stan liking his religion???
@stansbrough and @floralconversations on tumblr
kudos and comments make my heart go whoosh